



## **TIPS TO AVOID NOROVIRUS AND INFLUENZA**

**What is norovirus?** Norovirus is a germ which causes diarrhea. It spreads very easily.

**What are common symptoms of norovirus?** Vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, and stomach pain are common symptoms of norovirus. Some people also experience fever, headache, or body aches.

**How long does illness due to norovirus last?** Most people sick with norovirus get better in 1 to 3 days. Norovirus can be more serious for young children, the elderly, and people with other health conditions. It can lead to severe dehydration and hospitalization.

**What can I do to treat dehydration due to norovirus?** Drink plenty of liquids to replace fluids that are lost from vomiting and diarrhea. Sports drinks and other drinks without caffeine or alcohol can help with mild dehydration. But, these drinks may not replace important nutrients and minerals. Oral rehydration fluids that you can get over the counter are most helpful for mild dehydration. For more severe dehydration, you should contact your doctor.

**How do I keep norovirus from spreading?**

- **Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water** especially after using the bathroom or changing diapers and always before eating. Hand sanitizer is not effective against norovirus.
- **Do not prepare food for others when you are sick** and for 48 hours afterwards.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces with a product that contains bleach** (follow the instructions on the label and leave it on the area for 5 minutes and then clean the area with soap and water)
- If you have diarrhea due to norovirus, **wash your soiled laundry in hot water with high heat**

Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/norovirus/index.html>

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**What are symptoms of influenza?** The symptoms of influenza include the abrupt onset of fever, sore throat, headache, cough, muscle aches, and fatigue. This illness generally lasts about 5 to 7 days

**What can I do to fight the flu?**

- **Get your flu vaccine**
- **Stop germs by washing your hands or using hand sanitizer. Cover your cough** with a tissue or mask. **Disinfect surfaces.**
- **Take antiviral medications if your doctor prescribes them.** Not everyone with the flu will require treatment but take them if your doctor prescribes them.

Reference: **VHA DIRECTIVE1192**; <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/prevention.htm>